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24 JUN 1974

Vice Admiral Rufus L. Taylor, USN (Ret.)

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[Redacted]

Dear Admiral:

Thank you for your note of June 8th. Your questions are certainly legitimate, and I will try to give you a satisfactory answer.

The change in the Board of National Estimates stems essentially from the President's charge in November 1971 to the Director to take positive leadership of the whole Community. As I contemplated that job, it seemed to me that I needed some help. I thought I particularly needed this help focused on key geographic or functional areas, so that I could turn to a senior staff officer for a particular problem and have him look at it from my viewpoint. This involved considerations of what needs to be collected, analyzed, and produced, contact with our customers, contact with experts throughout the Community whatever their bureaucratic connections, estimates, evaluation of product and a look at the resource problem.

To help me, I thus chose about twelve senior officers and gave each responsibility for a major problem area. As you can see, their responsibilities are much broader than that of the Board of National Estimates, whose sole function, producing estimates, is only one of the activities of the 'National Intelligence Officer.' The NIO does not have a staff (being limited to an assistant and a secretary) but, rather, turns to the specialists in the intelligence agencies who have expertise in the subject of his assignment. The products of this effort, whether collection guidance, finished intelligence or resource evaluations, are processed through the United States Intelligence Board with the heads of the agencies so that we do get the 'wise man' level of attention the old Board provided.

The NIO's have been chosen from throughout the Community, to include two former members of the Board of National Estimates, one

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from the NSC Staff, one from CIA/OCI, one from the U. S. SALT delegation, a former CIA Station Chief, a senior officer of INR (a lady), an economist from Rand and, you will be pleased to hear, an active duty

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[redacted] The first six months or so of the effort have been thoroughly successful from my point of view, have proved the validity of the approach and have relieved the concerns of all but a few who would have preferred to maintain the old Board of National Estimates. I believe that our Estimates are as good and objective as the former ones, while we get many additional contributions from the senior officers involved.

To expand a bit on the above, I am enclosing a copy of a New York Times article, which is reasonably balanced, and the text of a speech I made in Los Angeles. I hope this material will help answer some of your well-posed questions and also assist you with any speaking engagements you may have.

Hope to see you soon.

Sincerely,

/s/ Bill

W. E. Colby  
Director

P. S. As you see in the papers, we are still struggling with Vic's book, which is now on appeal -- and which, incidentally, will be a very successful best seller. It is a sad story.

Drafted by GCarver

Rewritten: DCI:blp

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